

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A cooking apparatus comprising:
 - a vessel having an annular rim;
 - an insert supported in rotational engagement with said vessel and comprising an annular rim portion engaging said vessel rim; and
 - wherein said insert rim is configured to rotationally engage said vessel rim such that when said insert is engaged with said vessel, said insert remains engaged with said vessel as said insert is rotated relative to said vessel in an arc not less than 45 degrees.
2. The cooking apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a lid and wherein said vessel has a shoulder having a diameter to support said insert and said lid simultaneously.
3. The cooking apparatus of claim 2 wherein said vessel shoulder supports said lid when said insert is not used.
4. The cooking apparatus of claim 1 wherein said insert further comprises a large aperture and a region of straining apertures.
5. A cooking apparatus comprising:
 - a vessel having an annular rim;
 - a strainer insert supported in rotational engagement with said vessel and comprising an annular rim portion engaging said vessel rim;

a latch member attached to and extending from a first of said rims and capturing the other of said rims;

at least one cutout in the other of said rims;

said insert detachable from said vessel when said latch member is aligned with said cutout; and

said insert being rotatable relative to said vessel when said latch member is aligned and when not aligned with said cutout.

6. The cooking apparatus of claim 5 further including a lid wherein said vessel has a shoulder having a diameter to support said insert and said lid simultaneously.

7. The cooking apparatus of claim 6 wherein said vessel shoulder supports said lid when said insert is not used.

8. The cooking apparatus of claim 5 wherein said latch comprises a hook.

9. The cooking apparatus of claim 7 wherein said hook is C-shaped in cross section.

10. The cooking apparatus of claim 5 wherein said other of said rims comprises a plurality of cutouts, said cutouts being space apart such that said other rim remains captured by said latch members as insert is rotated relative to said vessel in an arc not less than 45 degrees.

11. The cooking apparatus of claim 5 wherein said other rim comprises two cutouts approximately 180 degrees apart.
12. The cooking apparatus of claim 11 wherein said first rim further comprises a second latch member located approximately 180 degrees apart from said latch member.
13. The cooking apparatus of claim 5 wherein the number of said cutouts is greater than the number of said latch members.
14. The cooking apparatus of claim 5 wherein said strainer insert further comprises a large aperture and a region of straining apertures.
15. A cooking apparatus comprising:
 - a cooking vessel having a first rim;
 - an insert having a second rim resting upon said first rim, said insert comprising a region of straining apertures and an access aperture;
 - a cutout in at least one of said rims; and
 - a hook member extending from the other of said rims, said hook member having a crevice receiving the rim having said cutout and locking said insert to said vessel when said hook and said cutout are not aligned.
16. The cooking apparatus of claim 15 further comprising a lid supported on said insert and closing said vessel.

17. The cooking apparatus of claim 16 wherein said lid is free of apertures.
18. The cooking apparatus of claim 17 wherein said vessel has an annular inner shoulder having a diameter sized to support the outer edge of said lid.
19. The cooking apparatus of claim 15 wherein said insert is rotatable relative to said vessel when said hook member and said cutout are aligned and when not aligned.
20. The cooking apparatus of claim 19 further including a lid supported on said insert, said lid being rotatable relative to said insert.
21. The cooking apparatus of claim 19 further comprising a plurality of cutouts spaced apart such that said insert remains locked to said vessel by said hook members as said insert is rotated relative to said vessel in an arc not less than 45 degrees.
22. The cooking apparatus of claim 15 wherein said crevice is formed at a diameter greater than a diameter of said rim having said cutout.
23. The cooking apparatus of claim 22 wherein said rims have substantially the same outer diameter.

24. The cooking apparatus of claim 23 further comprising a lid and wherein said insert has an annular shoulder and said lid is supported on said shoulder.

25. A cooking apparatus comprising:

a vessel having an annular rim with cutouts;

an insert having a body with straining apertures, a shoulder, and a rim supported on said vessel rim; and

hook members having C-shaped cross sections disposed on said insert rim and engaging said vessel rim when said insert is positioned on said vessel such that said hook members are not aligned with said cutouts, said hook members being free of engagement with said vessel rim when said hook members are aligned with said cutouts.

26. The cooking apparatus of claim 25 further comprising a lid supported on said insert shoulder.

27. The cooking apparatus of claim 26 wherein said lid is see-through.

28. The cooking apparatus of claim 25 wherein said insert further comprises an access aperture.

29. The cooking apparatus of claim 28 wherein said access aperture is spaced apart from said straining apertures.

30. A method of cooking food items, the method comprising:

- providing a pot having a rim with a plurality of cutouts;
- providing a strainer insert having a rim with a plurality of hooks;
- positioning the hooks in the cutouts and supporting the strainer insert on the pot;
- rotating the strainer insert such that the hooks do not align with the cutouts so as to lock the strainer insert onto the pot;
- cooking the food items; and
- straining the food items.

31. The method of claim 30 further comprising:

- realigning the hooks and cutouts; and
- removing the strainer from the pot.